Gillingham Waterfront
Planning Brief
June 2004

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Medway Council
Regeneration and Environment Division
Regeneration and Environmental Projects

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Reason for this Planning Brief

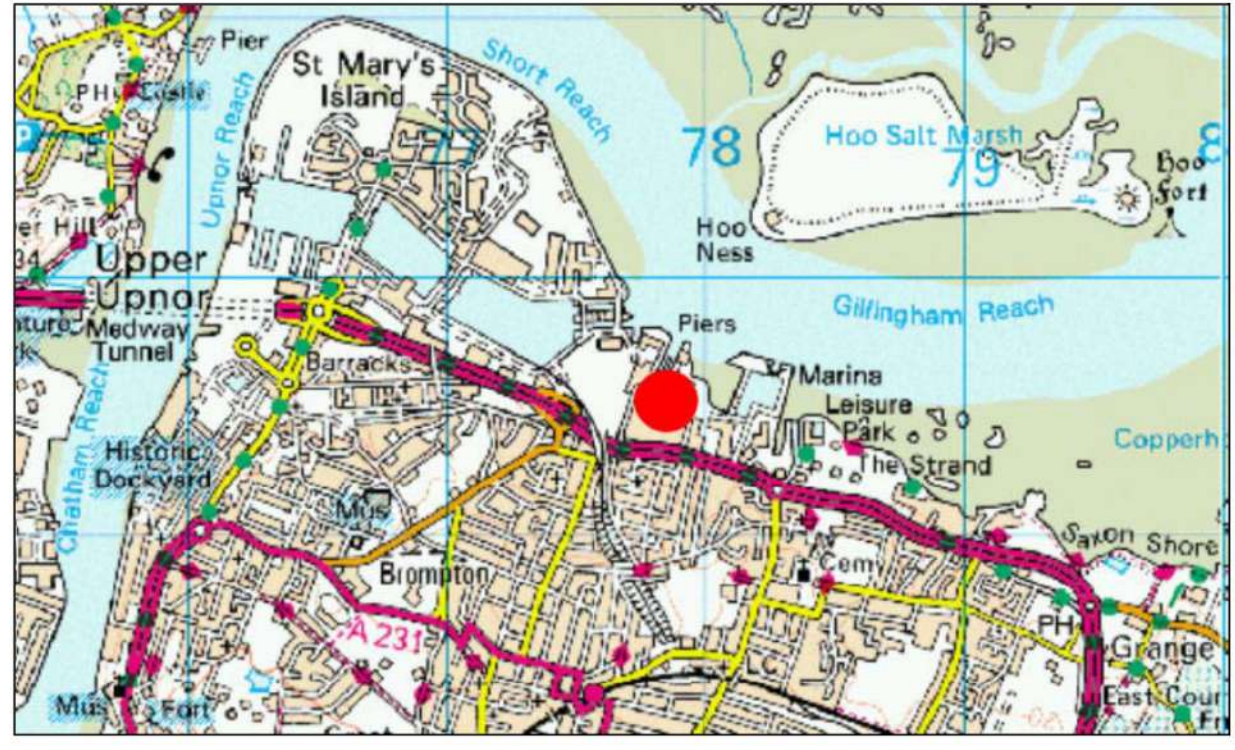
Akzo Nobel has now closed its chemicals plant and it will become available for redevelopment. The adjoining areas of Gillingham Pier, and Pier Approach Road are owned and managed by Medway Council who wish with landowners to develop a comprehensive masterplan for the regeneration of the area. This brief encourages a development that embraces all the land around the existing pier area.

The existing waterfront area is seen as an under-utilised asset and the council has long held aspirations to ensure its future viability .The sites are currently designated as employment land within the Medway Local Plan with a presumption against the loss of employment space. However, with the closure of the chemical plant an opportunity has arisen to reassess the development potential of the site.

The closure of Akzo Nobel provides the opportunity for the creation of a significant mixed-use development with a major residential element together with the maximisation of employment opportunities within the Medway Waterfront. For this change to happen a detailed planning brief is required to guide the re-use of the site and ensure that the correct balance of uses, quality of design and maximisation of opportunities for a significant uplift of the area is achieved.

Development of Gillingham Waterfront is an important element of the council's strategy to transform Medway Waterfront and to regenerate the urban core.

Location of site within Medway



1. Background

1.1 The 10 hectare 'Gillingham Waterfront' site is situated between the River Medway and the A289 Gillingham Northern Link Road with good connections to the M2. It contains and attracts a number of employment and leisure activities related to the pier. Over 7 hectares is currently taken up by the Akzo Nobel chemical plant. The rest of the site contains a waste depot site, some industrial start-up units, 7 dwellings, Gillingham Pier and a handful of small businesses associated with the pier.

1.2 The existing Gillingham Pier facility is owned and maintained by Medway Council. In the late 1990's it became clear that the facility was deteriorating. In partnership with Groundwork Medway Swale, a programme of improvements to regenerate the area was developed and SRB funding sought. Over £1million was made available and works to date include road improvements, dredging, the creation of an angler's area, restoration of the Victorian slipway and the installation of a new pontoon. A further phase of work was identified to complete the regeneration of the pier, including the provision of facilities for users of the pier and the redevelopment of the premises located on the Western arm. These aspirations can now be carried forward as part of the wider regeneration of a larger area.

1.3 The closure of the existing Akzo Nobel chemical plant presents an opportunity to maximise mixed use on this land and restore some of the pier-side character for the benefit of local residents, businesses and their employees, existing and future.

1.4 Within the wider context, the Gillingham Pier area and the adjoining Akzo Nobel site are designated as an existing employment area in the local plan where there is a presumption against the loss of employment areas. However, its location within the Medway Waterfront and the council's aspiration to make the best use of brownfield sites and opportunities that arise for the provision of significant residential development and employment suggest that a mix of uses should be promoted here. A brief, detailing the appropriate uses and development, is needed to ensure that a sustainable, quality, balanced development is achieved and that employment levels in the region of 150 to 200 jobs are maintained (see Appendix 1: Local Plan Policies).

2. Vision

2.1 The vision for the area is a significant integrated urban development, with a unique character, capitalising on the riverside location and maximising the use of the site.

2.2 This will be a step to achieving the comprehensive development of the Gillingham waterfront area, located within the heart of Medway, creating a distinctive and high quality environment. The area can provide a vibrant mix of uses, maximising the opportunities for employment and water based activities integrated with residential properties combining to produce a viable and balanced development.

3. Development objectives

- To create a high quality environment and inspiring architecture and public realm which contributes to the regeneration of Medway.
- To maintain and manage, for the long term, the public facility at the pier
- To develop a distinct sense of identity, place and character, and to maximise views of, and enhance the attractiveness of the river.
- To design a permeable layout which encourages pedestrian and cycle movements and restricts vehicular speeds
- To provide a secure environment which will promote natural surveillance and improve quality of life.
- To provide a range and choice of dwellings and to promote social integration
- To develop in a sustainable way - minimising pollution, encouraging energy efficiency and reducing the need to travel by car.
- To provide a range of employment opportunities.
- To provide on-site community services and other necessary infrastructure.

4. Area Context

4.1 The site is located within the conurbation of Medway and is well served by major transport links.

4.2 To the west lie Chatham Docks, of an exclusively industrial nature. Beyond, is Chatham Maritime a large mixed development of residential, leisure and commercial uses. The Royal School of Military Engineering lies to the southwest and between them lies the site of the existing and proposed joint university campuses for Medway.

4.3 To the east lie the car sales site and buildings of Dagenham motors and the gas storage compound, and to the northeast is Gillingham Marina, which includes a permanent water area, tidal moorings, a sport and fitness centre and boat storage.

4.4 Further to the east is the Strand leisure area and recent residential development.

4.5 A full range of shops is available in Chatham and Gillingham. Saxon Way County junior school, St. Mary's RC primary school; and Richmond Road school are all within ½ mile. Leisure facilities are available at the Black Lion Centre and the Sunlight Centre in Richmond Road is a newly developed health centre.

Surrounding development

5. Site Context

Access and site boundary

5.1 There are three vehicular access points into the site off the A289 Pier Road, a dual carriageway that forms part of the 'Northern Link Road', and the southern boundary to the site. These include Pier Approach Road, the entrance into the Akzo Nobel Chemicals works and the entrance to the office block. The site is further contained by the river to the north (over 150 metres of river frontage) and the high dock wall (boundary to Chatham Docks) to the west. To the east, it is bounded by the privately owned Gillingham Marina, some industrial premises, a multi-storey car storage facility and a car dealership garage and showroom. There is currently no access through the east or west boundaries, leaving the site particularly self-contained.

5.2 Pier Approach Road runs from Pier Road along the dock wall to the inland end of the pier where it forks to serve both arms of the pier. At its southern end (close to the site entrance) is the access to the Pier Road industrial estate, the Cleanaway waste depot and a small area containing 7 houses.

Topography and vegetation

5.3 The site is fairly level, with the adjacent residential land on the south side of the dual carriageway sloping steeply up, providing views over the site. There are a few trees of value, by virtue of size and appearance, close to the houses, two of which are subject to Tree Preservation Orders.

Character and uses

5.4 The character of the site is mixed, reflecting its varied uses. The existing public pier area is the natural focus. Its character is shaped by the tidal changes from waterfront to mudflats, the mix of river-based activities taking place, and its built form and spatial structure that is open. The pier surroundings are made up largely of old warehouses and single-storey buildings for associated uses such as the piermaster's building, and also includes a few commercial buildings, grouped at the northern end of the eastern arm and previously used for car and boat repairs. Most of these buildings are of poor quality and condition, and are obsolete.

5.5 The pier remains operational. It has a slipway available to the public for launching and landing, a floating pontoon which provides berths for 15-20 small craft, let on an annual basis, and mooring facilities on the Western wall for commercial craft. Commercial activities along the western wall include boat repairs. There is also an angler's area at the end of the Western arm, which is well used. As well as meeting local demand, these uses and facilities can contribute significantly to the character and diversity of the area. For this reason they should be retained or reaccommodated within new development, where appropriate.

5.6 Medway Pier Marine is a private facility situated on the eastern arm of the pier, allowing for up to 60 berths, fuel and water facilities, toilets/showers, repairs, chandlery and cranage. It has now ceased operation.

5.7 The river is navigable by large commercial vessels that use the Chatham docks, Medway City Estate and the wharves at Rochester Reach. The river is also much used by pleasure craft ranging from small dinghies to large yachts and motorboats. There is a speed limit in the section of the river that fronts the

site, effectively preventing the use of speedboats for water skiing or water scooters.

5.8 A large part of the site currently accommodates the Akzo Nobel chemical works. This lines the eastern edge of the pier area, the waterfront east of this and most of the Pier Road frontage. Because of changes in production techniques and global economics, most of the buildings are at the end of their useful life. The site has now been decommissioned and demolition of obsolete buildings and structure is planned. With the exception of a modern office building and staff club facilities the buildings are old.

5.9 The western side of Pier Approach Road is marked by tall, and mostly attractive, brick walls whilst the eastern side is much less consistent and is punctuated by entry points serving the existing employment uses and houses. Public car parking spaces and some soft landscaping features are situated along the western/dock wall. This road provides a fairly enclosed view, suddenly revealing the open pier area at the end.

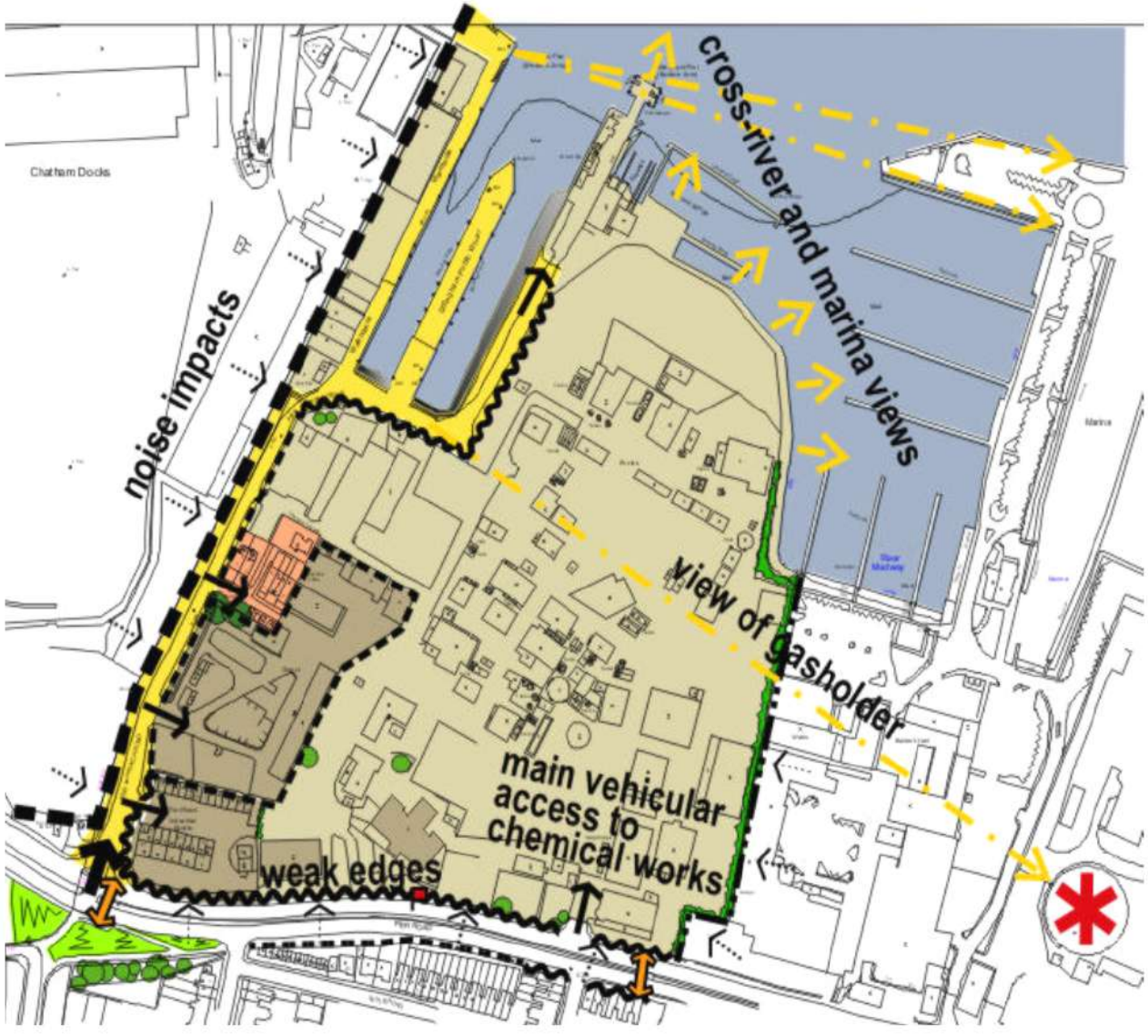
5.10 The site's roadside character as experienced along Pier Road is dominated by the noise and movement of fast flowing traffic. There is no continuous building frontage and apart from some small areas of maturing landscaping, the industrial and office units lining the road are simply bounded by wire mesh fencing creating a weak overall road frontage. The road frontage on the opposite side consists of a high and featureless concrete wall and terraced housing some of which is unimproved, creating a fairly run-down impression of the area.

Views

5.11 The views into and out of the site also help define the character and appearance of the area. These include views over the river to and from Hoo, Lower Upnor, St Mary's Island and the industrial Kingsnorth area as well as views to and from Gillingham residential areas to the south and the gasholders to the east (see photographs below).

Land ownership

Existing site characteristics



- Public realm
- Redevelopment land
- Industrial land or buildings (to be retained)
- Housing
- Principal site entrance towards pier
- Pedestrian crossings
- Entrances to individual sites
- Strong edge
- Weak edge
- Brick or concrete wall
- Eastern boundary
- Noise source
- Bus stop
- Tree
- TPO tree
- Vegetation strip / hedge
- Gasholder

View north-northwest – St. Mary's Island, Lower Upnor and

View north-east – Kingsnorth power station, Hoo Island and Gillingham Marina

6. Summary of Opportunities and Constraints

- As a key 'brownfield' site along the Gillingham Waterfront the redevelopment can be a potential catalyst for the regeneration of the wider area, and contribute to the renaissance of Medway. It can do this through the provision of employment and leisure opportunities for local residents, by setting new standards of architecture and urban design, and by extending residential use right up to the river.

- Redevelopment of this site provides an opportunity to open up further public access to the waterfront, and to lead the way in terms of quality and character.

- The harbour is an under-utilised feature of importance to the immediate surroundings and, in conjunction with the nearby marinas, offers a distinctive basis on which to create a new community.

- The harbour area can be a focus for activity and the attraction of visitors to the site – a mix of uses and the creation of a high quality public realm will be essential.
- There are views to and from the site to be considered – across the river and across the site from the high ground / residential area to the south. The design of residential development should take advantage of riverside views. The way in which this is designed will also be important in reflecting a positive image of the development as seen from various points along the river.

- The massing and height of the new development will need to consider their relationship to dominant features close by, such as the dockyard buildings and perimeter wall, the gasholders, the Gillingham Marina buildings, the car showrooms and ship repair bays and the Gillingham Northern Link Road. The open river setting provides opportunities for relatively tall buildings in this location.

- The site is relatively self-contained and 'cut off' from other residential development by the Link Road. This severance can be minimised by providing good pedestrian links and crossings as well as good public transport services to Gillingham and Chatham town centres. The site is currently served by the number 183 bus at approximately 20 minute intervals.

- There is no predominant built style to follow – providing an opportunity for innovative and bold design.

- Potential exists to provide new or expand existing educational, healthcare or retail facilities to serve the new residential community envisaged, and existing residential areas to the south. It will be preferable to locate community facilities on-site to contribute to the sustainable mix of uses and activity.

- There is an opportunity to diversify the range of employment type, to include low noise impact uses that will 'mix' sensitively with residential uses. The number of jobs within the former Akzo Nobel site should be approximately 150- 200 full time jobs, which reflects the previous numbers employed by Akzo Nobel. The overall employment provision on the whole waterfront site should naturally be greater than this.

- Levels of ground contamination will need to be investigated and any necessary remedial action taken prior to development. A ground survey has already been carried out for the Akzo Nobel land indicating some on site contamination, including small areas of heavy metals. An environmental impact assessment, containing details of a full investigation and proposed plans for remediation and validation, will have to be carried out as part of any planning application.

- The site lies within the river flood plain area – development will need to address flood risk issues in line with Environment Agency guidance and Planning Policy Guidance 25: Development and Flood Risk.

- Development must have regard to the Special Protection Area (SPA) / Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI)

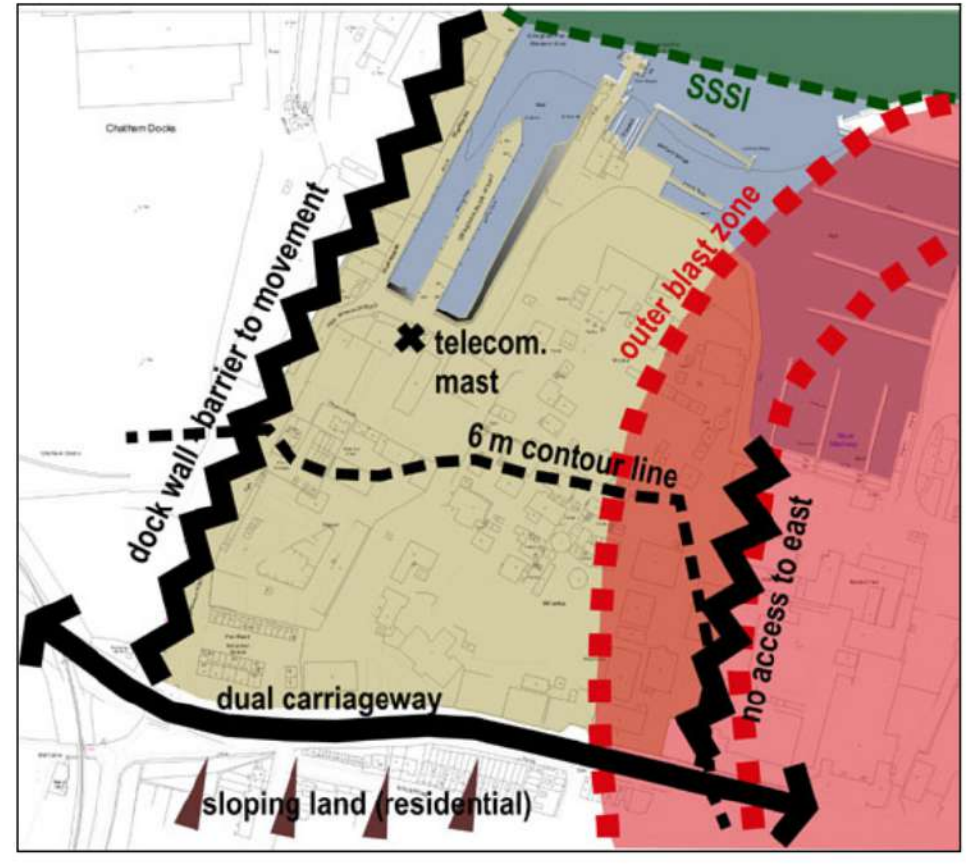
- Noise levels from the dual carriageway, Chatham Docks, the waste depot and other industrial uses within and adjacent to the site will impact on the amenity of residents and other users of the site. Attenuation measures may be necessary and innovative design solutions sought.

- Road safety and other community safety issues, for example, involving public/private realm definition, will need to be addressed in the design.

- In relation to the neighbouring gasholders and the risk they pose, part of the site lies within the outer zone of consultation with the Health and Safety Executive. This only places constraints on sensitive forms of development, which are not envisaged, in this location, and not on general residential development. See paragraph .8.2.18.

- Proposals should investigate the relocation of the existing telecommunications mast.

Site Constraints



7. Design Guidance

7.1 The Kent Design Guide provides advice on building design and urban design issues. It encourages design that embraces local distinctiveness and maximises the use of land. Through the adoption of such an approach, the creation of a safe and attractive environment that minimises the use of resources is possible. The ten key principles put forward by Kent Design are listed in Appendix 2.

7.2 Government advice in Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 1 'General Policy and Principles' makes it clear that developers should be able to demonstrate how they have taken account of the need for good design in their proposals. This should be done in a manner appropriate to the nature, scale and key characteristics of the site. Designs should also be informed by the companion guides to PPG3: Housing, namely 'By Design' and 'Better Places to Live'. Appendix 3 provides further information on the above guidance.

7.3 Developers will be expected to submit a *design statement* demonstrating the reasoning behind their overall design concept and how their proposals meet the design principles set out in Kent Design, in government guidance and in this brief. Design concepts should be specific to the site. Standard 'off the shelf' designs will not be acceptable.

7.4 A checklist of design issues to be considered is provided in Appendix 4

8. Design Principles

8.1 Future Character

8.1.1 Development should aim to create an attractive, interesting, high quality and strong urban character, within a contemporary idiom that allows for innovative building design. The site's future character will depend largely upon the density and mix of development and activity and how these are woven together. One of the main challenges will be to integrate sensitively with the neighbouring residential area and the existing dwellings on site. Retaining major strategic views through to the river from Milner and Corporation Roads will contribute to this goal. .

8.1.2 The maritime and urban environment should be well structured with a strong sense of enclosure provided by the buildings, setting a human scale to the development. Development should ensure an efficient use of land in order to create a density capable of supporting a mix of activities in line with sustainable principles. This will bring an interesting and vibrant character and a positive image to this area. Suburban organisation of space, which often relies on abundant public and private landscaping, with buildings set informally along the road system, would be inappropriate for this site.

8.1.3 Public accessibility, particularly to the pier-side area and waterfront, should be made especially evident, as this will be a key element of the area's character.

8.1.4 The components making up the Pier Road frontage will have an important bearing on the image and character of the whole of the site. A strong, attractive and complete edge to Pier Road should be created, avoiding excessive gaps between buildings, which do not serve as entry points. See paragraph 8.3.14-16.

8.2 Land use mix

8.2.1 A balanced mix of land uses is required to regenerate the Gillingham Pier area. This should include housing, employment, and leisure uses along with areas of public open space. In this way there will be a range of activities and greater opportunity for social interaction, bringing urban vitality and street life to the area throughout the day.

Retained uses

8.2.2 The waste depot is likely to stay in its current location for the medium term at least. This impacts upon the area in terms of noise, odour and vehicular traffic, and will have implications on the suitability of potential adjoining uses. The site is owned by Medway Council and is required for use by the holders of the council's waste contract. However this site should be brought forward as a future phase of redevelopment when no longer required as a waste depot station.

8.2.3 Development must respond sensitively to the needs and amenity of the occupants of the existing cottages, which will remain in place. This will naturally include daylight levels and overlooking considerations.

Location of employment uses

8.2.4 Local Plan policy ED1 seeks to encourage Business (Class B1), general industry (B2) and storage and distribution (B8) within the Pier Road area. It will be appropriate to locate such uses (which are less sensitive to traffic noise than some other uses such as residential) along the Pier Road frontage. Buildings should present a strong and attractive road frontage. Well-designed office buildings will be appropriate and could take advantage of the prominent location. Light industrial uses, if sensitively housed in well-designed buildings, may also be considered appropriate (see paragraphs 8.3.14 -16).

8.2.5 There is an identified need for commercial property in the 1,000-2,000 sq ft size range in Medway together with established demand for the existing units at Pier Road Estate. Provision of this type needs to be retained and the opportunity for further provision, including grow-on space, explored.

8.2.6 There will also be scope for other employment generators within the overall site, such as:

- Food, drink, small-scale retail and leisure uses – focused around the public spaces of the pier area to create activity and encourage visitors to the area.
- Offices – small-scale also around the pier, perhaps as a separation between ground floor activities and residential apartments above. The existing Akzo Nobel office building is still in a good condition. In the interests of sustainability, this should be retained unless proposals for redevelopment are of a sufficiently high standard to justify its replacement.
- Manufacturing and distribution (B2 and B8 uses) – located in proximity to Pier Road dual carriageway.
- Hotel use

Pier-side uses

8.2.7 The pier-side area will continue to provide the focal point or 'heart' of the regeneration site. The density, level and mix of activity and development should reflect this. Public accessibility to this area, as with all the parts of the waterfront, must be retained and encouraged through high quality design of the public realm, which meets the needs of different users.

8.2.8 Active ground floor frontages relating to leisure, retail, and/or commercial/office uses, including marine-based business, should address this area, with residential on upper floors to provide for natural surveillance. In this sense, true 'vertical' mixing of land uses is required. The council recognises that in commercial terms the market for non-residential use in this area is not yet proven. In the event of such uses not proving viable, the council may accept alternative use (i.e. residential) along parts of the ground floor, in order to avoid the creation of long-term empty properties, which could potentially damage an otherwise attractive area. However, such a case would have to be fully justified with the proof of market non-viability clearly demonstrated.

8.2.9 It will be vital to continue to provide for the operational needs of the working pier and to safeguard the amenity of current users. The provision of any new facilities will need to be located close to the pier area. These facilities

could include accommodation for the harbourmaster, public toilets, showers and changing rooms and some open vehicle parking areas in proximity to the pier to encourage angling, boating and other river-based activities. Servicing of the fuelling station must be allowed for, for example, by providing adequate road widths and turning circles for fuel tankers.

8.2.10 Opportunities may also exist around the pier's eastern arm to extend the level of public moorings. This would form a visual extension to the existing Gillingham Marina, enhancing the active character of the area.

8.2.11 Within the pier-side public space, a distinctive area may be designed to accommodate temporary activities and events, such as, art exhibitions and public entertainment events. Although this would be a pedestrian priority space, it may also double as extra visitor parking space should circumstances require.

Housing

8.2.12 Housing will form a major component of the site. Dwellings should generally be located away from Pier Road due to the high degree of traffic noise and potential air pollution. Where residential use is located close to Pier Road, design proposals should mitigate against these adverse roadside impacts. 25 percent of total on-site housing provision should be affordable homes, in accordance with Local Plan Policy and should be well integrated with market housing.

8.2.13 There should be a mixture of sizes, types and tenures with dwellings for a variety of occupiers, including persons with disabilities. Given the location and character of the site it is expected that flats will predominate. Some of these should contain three or more bedrooms so as to be potentially suitable for families. Family-sized townhouses may also be appropriate within the central parts of the site. It will not be acceptable to have large parts of the site dedicated to one and two bedroom flats of identical plan form. Lift access will be encouraged in order to make dwellings suitable for all groups including families and the elderly. Dwellings should also provide adequate storage space and in particular areas for bicycle storage.

Other housing types

8.2.14 Student accommodation may be provided to contribute to the current local demand and add to the community mix. However, this will not represent the full 25% affordable housing contribution. The council will also encourage the construction of a number of dwellings to 'Lifetime Homes' standard on this site. This allows dwellings to be easily adapted to suit the needs of household members with mobility problems – see "Meeting Part M and designing Lifetime Homes" Joseph Rowntree Foundation (1999).

Live / work accommodation

8.2.15 Live / work units can be a valuable addition to the variety of accommodation available. These could be located around the pier as part of a mix of development. The workspaces need not be limited to office use – other B1 uses such as research and light assembly or repairs may also

be acceptable uses provided they are compatible with housing and do not cause any nuisance to residents or users of adjacent public spaces.

Community uses

8.2.16 Community uses such as a doctor surgery, health centre and crèche should be provided within the site. Local services are running at above capacity, and so meeting the needs of future residents on-site is an important consideration. From an urban design perspective, locating community facilities within the site can contribute significantly to providing a balanced mix of activity and help to integrate the new and existing areas more effectively in terms of function.

Space between uses

8.2.17 Where land uses cannot be mixed, for example, housing with general industrial, any space, which separates these uses, will need to be sensitively designed and fully integrated within the overall design concept. Such spaces may include roads or other forms of public space. Should this be the case, then both forms of development should benefit from this space. It may be that some form of dividing element is required to reinforce the separation of uses. This may take the form of open space, tree planting, walls or railings. Whatever is used should be attractive and still allow for surveillance. Depending on the nature of the business, some screening may be appropriate, for example where there will be external storage. However, it is expected that this will be kept to a minimum.

Development within the gasholder consultation zone

8.2.18 Part of the site lies within the 'outer zone of consultation' in relation to the nearby high pressure gasholders' blast zones. This is shown on the constraints map. Within this zone the Health and Safety Executive advise against the following sensitive forms of development:

- Hospitals, nursing homes and sheltered housing where the area is greater than 0.25 Ha
- Schools, nurseries and crèches where the area is greater than 1.4 Ha
- Open-air developments where there could be more than 1000 people present e.g. open-air markets, outdoor concerts.

Indicative design strategy

8.3 Built form

Layout: a legible urban structure

8.3.1 The layout should form a clear structure and a tightly built grain appropriate to the urban and maritime character of the area. The layout and orientation of buildings should be informed principally by the ways in which they will shape the network of public routes and spaces. In this sense, all buildings must face onto and form coherent edges to the streets and other public spaces. This 'public face' should be evident through careful positioning of entrances, windows and active frontages.

8.3.2 In order for buildings not to 'turn their backs' to the public realm, perimeter block forms may be the most suitable option for the residential and mixed-use components. This will also provide courtyard space that may be used for parking, for private open space or maybe for semi-private spaces allowing pedestrian through routes.

8.3.3 Specific places within the urban structure, such as prominent corners or 'gateways' to particular parts of the site, will be more significant than others. They must be addressed by specifically designed buildings. Blank gable walls will not be acceptable. Corners will require particular attention in the design of perimeter blocks.

8.3.4 The principal entrance(s) from Pier Road will, in particular, require definition to encourage visitors into the area. This may involve the replacement of existing small buildings within the Pier Road Industrial Estate with a more prominent and visually appealing 'gateway' or landmark building or group of buildings. Alternatively, rather than a building, a piece of public art or hard and soft landscaping could be used to emphasise this entrance corner.

Scale and hierarchy of urban space

8.3.5 The hierarchy of urban form should be marked by an increase in building height towards the focal area – pier and waterfront. This highly accessible area should also be the most distinctive in order to aid local legibility and promote the greatest mix of activity. This northern part of the site is also likely to be able to absorb fairly high buildings due to its open river aspect. This will be limited, however, due to the potential impact of high buildings on views through the site, on the public spaces they enclose and the greater degree of servicing they may require. They should not be overbearing on the public realm, nor appear 'slab-like' or monotonous in design.

8.3.6 The scale and massing of any proposed buildings of 6 or more storeys will require particular justification. This should be done through a thorough assessment of visual and other physical impacts of the proposed buildings on the landscape. A townscape and visual analysis of the site should be included in an Environmental Impact Assessment.

Landmark buildings

8.3.7 There may be scope for landmark buildings or structures to add emphasis to the Pier / focal area, river's edge or to mark out 'gateway' entrance points. They should form a natural finishing point or turning point for the eye, should be attractive and interesting in form, materials and detail, where possible provide active frontages at ground floor and relate

comfortably with the public realm. This does not relate solely to higher buildings, since height is not the only factor, or even a prerequisite to the creation of a landmark.

Density

8.3.8 Government guidance (PPG3, 2000) calls for a minimum net residential density of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare. Development will be at least in the upper reaches of this range, reflecting the urban nature of the site. It may be possible to achieve a higher urban density without loss of amenity or quality of design, not least because of the very open outlook across the river and marinas that will retain a feeling of space from many viewpoints within the site.

Massing and proportions

8.3.9 The massing or bulk of buildings should be broken down so that their proportions fit comfortably with the public realm, do not constrain permeability nor obstruct important views through the site, including those from the residential area to the south.

Building envelopes

8.3.10 A contextual approach to the design of buildings should be adopted, taking cues from the riverfront and pier character, the shape of the site, the surrounding landscape and topography, the prominent views and the established structures such as the dock wall. There is no existing architectural style to follow, so allowing for contemporary and innovative design responses. Pastiche architectural styles must be avoided.

8.3.11 Buildings' shape, rhythm and grain should provide varied, interesting and robust frontages, particularly at human height, with attention paid to the distances at which they will be viewed. For example, buildings of bold design and strong rhythm should address views of the site from across the river. Building designs should take advantage of river views through the use of windows, balconies and terraces, which will add interest and increase opportunities for natural surveillance of the public spaces surrounding them. Prominent gables should be carefully detailed, avoiding blank facades which create 'dead' spaces. Boundaries and edges associated with the building envelopes should be properly integrated with the overall building designs and materials.

Details and materials

8.3.12 The materials, colours and detailing of development schemes are key elements in the creation of distinctive places. A coherent and limited palette of high quality materials should be specified; possibly taking cues from the maritime location, to create a fresh, bold and attractive urban character. These will need to be particularly resistant to the elements of this estuarine microclimate. Details should be integral to the overall design. These principles should be extended also to the design of the public realm, which is considered in greater detail below.

Pier Road Frontage

8.3.13 The combination of building, landscaping and boundary design will be required to provide a strong and attractive edge to the prominent Pier Road frontage. Proposals for office or other commercial development in this location should provide a fairly continuous building frontage that

addresses Pier Road, and a suitable setback distance to allow for some soft landscaping (incorporating footpath and 3 metre cycle path) and a degree of noise attenuation. It will be appropriate for such buildings to be at least 3 to 4 storeys high. A high quality design commensurate with the principles set out in paragraphs 8.3.9 to 8.3.12 will be expected.

8.3.14 The same principles will apply to proposals to develop light industrial units along Pier Road. They must be carefully designed to provide a coherent, well-proportioned and articulated overall frontage. Standard "tin sheds" of arbitrary profiles, colours and materials will not be acceptable. Individual units should not be overly bulky or dominant. It may, therefore, be appropriate for several units to be arranged along the frontage rather than one large unit.

8.3.15 The existing light industrial uses will also require different boundary treatments due to the untidy nature and sometimes unsightly 'nuisance' activities that they can present. In this case, solid, carefully landscaped and attractive boundaries will be required to enclose and separate them from the public realm, for example, brick walls, piers and railings. Improvement of the pedestrian footpath along this frontage will also be an important consideration.

8.4 Movement and connections

Site Access

8.4.1 There are currently two principal points of vehicular access to the site. A transport impact study will be required to assess the suitability of accesses from Pier Road to serve the site and the provision of access via Pier Approach Road.

8.4.2 At least one other access point should be created along Pier Road for pedestrians. This should link to pedestrian crossings and bus stops.

Places not roads

8.4.3 The movement or street network is a key component of the urban structure. Development should aim to create a 'walkable' neighbourhood. This is helped by designing a clear route hierarchy, which aids local legibility. Public space considerations should take precedence over vehicular traffic in informing the design of this environment. In general, this means that:

- Streets and paths should be direct and provide a choice of ways through the site and to public spaces within the site. This will preclude standard cul-de-sac layouts
- All parts of the movement network (including segregated footpaths) should be overlooked by surrounding development, well connected and barrier free for pedestrians, the mobility impaired and cyclists.
- Traffic calming should be fully integrated with the overall design of streets. This may be informed by the 'tracking' principle whereby the building layouts and orientation deliberately shape the space through which the road will flow in order to encourage lower speeds. This may include relatively short sections of straight road, minimal building set back distances, fairly tight radii and sightlines, pinch points,

variable road widths and shared surfaces. Such measures will be more appropriate than superimposed speed reduction features. They will also create a more intimate urban and pedestrian-friendly character.

- Reference should be made to the Government Guidance document *People, Places and Movement* (companion guide to Design Bulletin 32 and its replacement).

Mobility impaired

8.4.4 There are unlikely to be any major changes in level on this site, but should this be necessary, full consideration must be given to those, such as wheelchair users, who are impeded by these changes in level. All new development must have regard to Local Plan policy T22: Provision for people with disabilities. Further guidance on materials and detailing are provided in section 8.5.

Pier-side area

8.4.5 Around the pier area, streets should as far as possible have shared surface, pedestrian priority status, distinguished through use of distinctive paving.

Riverside walk

8.4.6 The waterfront should be publicly accessible and well connected to the overall route and public space network (in line with Local Plan Policy S3). Although the stretch of riverbank east of the pier is fairly short, public access should be created for pedestrians and cyclists. It should be fronted by development that provides an interesting, attractive and robust edge, with frequent entrance points (which encourages visitors to explore), adequate overlooking and allows for ease of maintenance.

8.4.7 An area of public open space could terminate this riverside walk where the pier area adjoins Gillingham Marina (see Indicative Design Strategy, page 14). This would provide an open setting for views to the marina, and should be attractively enclosed to the south and east by residential or mixed development. The design of the riverside walk should fit into the wider public realm strategy (see section 8.5).

8.4.8 For reasons of safety and security surrounding the existing private marina to the east, it may be appropriate to prevent unrestricted public access eastwards of the open space. The riverside edge, from this point to the marina, may accommodate private residential buildings closer to the water, providing views over the marina (whilst contributing to its security through surveillance).

Access to public transport

8.4.9 Any bus stops within the site or along the adjacent stretch of Pier Road should be overlooked by development and conveniently accessed by direct pedestrian routes. A Transport Impact Assessment should look at the possibility of providing a bus route to 'loop' into the site.

Future river bus

8.4.10 The pier itself may serve as an appropriate future location to serve a commercially operated river bus, and as such any alterations to the pier must safeguard this possibility.

Cycle paths

8.4.11 Cycle paths should also be fully integrated into the development. In particular, along Pier Road (A289) accommodation needs to be made for a 3-metre cycle path.

Parking

8.4.12 Residential developments which do not sit 6.25 metres above Ordnance Datum Newlyn (in line with the 1000 year tidal flood level) may accommodate car parking within their basement / ground floor levels. This will allow for habitable rooms to be constructed above this height as required by the Environment Agency (see paragraph 8.6.3). By following this approach parking will inevitably become a major part of the ground floor frontages to the public realm. In this case, sensitive design will be needed which carefully integrates with the hard and soft landscaping strategy so as not to dominate.

8.4.13 Car parking should not dominate the public realm. Where residential car parking is not already enclosed within the ground floors of buildings, they should be accommodated either within secure and overlooked rear courtyard areas, or within small on-street parking bays. On-street provision may also be more appropriate for visitor parking throughout the area. Disabled parking spaces for residents and visitors should be located for convenient access.

Car and cycle parking standards

8.4.14 Car parking provision should as far as possible follow the standards set in Policy T13 and Appendix 6 of the Medway Local Plan. These cite a maximum average of 1.5 spaces per dwelling. These standards also relate to cycle parking which should be provided at a minimum of 1 space per 5 dwellings. Where proposals deviate from these standards, they should be fully justified, having particular regard to public transport service provision.

Pier-side parking

8.4.15 If this area is to be successful as a mixed-use area and attract visitors, provision must be made for visitors' parking, including disabled parking, particularly around the pier-side public space area. This should provide spaces for a limited number of vehicles, including a number of conveniently-located boat trailer parking spaces, in an open (surface level) and accessible location in order to aid legibility and support activity, such as boating and fishing. It should allow for movement and encourage activity without being visually dominating. A number of spaces already exist alongside the dock wall along Pier Approach Road. These should be retained to serve the pier area.

8.5 Public Realm

8.5.1 The public realm is made up of the parts of the site that are available for use by everyone. The creation of a high quality public realm will be a key factor in the success of Gillingham Waterfront. It will require attractive, safe and uncluttered public spaces and routes that work effectively for all in society, including disabled and elderly people. At the same time it should exploit opportunities to inspire, excite and stimulate residents and visitors, and to strengthen local identity. The design of the public realm should take into account the durability of materials and ease of long-term maintenance.

Character

8.5.2 A strong, coherent approach to the design and treatment of the public realm is required to unite the various uses and buildings within the development. It should build on the existing site characteristics to create a bold and imaginative, yet functional, combination of hard and soft landscape elements that avoids a suburban character. The public realm will be particularly important at the waterfront - it will still be a working wharf, and the public realm should reflect this.

Public / private relationship

8.5.3 Public and private areas should be clearly defined through appropriate use of hard or soft boundary treatments, or changes in material. This is particularly important where the ground floor of residential development is in close proximity to the public realm. High quality materials and detailing should be used to create boundaries that are attractive and provide necessary privacy for residents. Where ground floor car parking is incorporated, these boundaries should avoid blank, featureless frontages.

Open Space

8.5.4 The area around the pier naturally lends itself to becoming the key public open space in the development – a vibrant, riverside space where a variety of uses come together. This should link to a number of smaller open spaces around the development. Continued provision should be made for angling. This should be at least as large as the existing area at the end of the western arm of the pier.

8.5.5 Green spaces may be incorporated within the residential areas or to act as a structuring element in the spaces in between areas of residential and commercial activity. All open spaces should be appropriately designed with a purpose in mind, and located within an overall hierarchy and structure of built form and open space. Left over space without a function is a wasted resource and is likely to be abused and vandalised.

8.5.6 It is important that residents have access to adequate open space to meet formal and informal recreation needs. Developers should therefore have regard to the requirements of local plan policies L4 and L5 relating to the type and amount of open space provision. This will depend on the number, type and size of new dwellings, and existing provision in the wider area. This may include improvements to off-site facilities.

Lighting

8.5.7 A comprehensive strategy for the site should demonstrate how lighting will be used, not just to provide safe levels of illumination, but also to add interest and emphasise focal points and features. Innovative lighting will be encouraged. Wall mounted fittings may be used to avoid street clutter.

Soft landscape

8.5.8 Planting should perform a variety of functions from small gardens to large-scale, space defining structure planting. Public spaces adjacent to the waterfront should consist of a mainly hard landscape treatment, in response to the industrial/ maritime character. Away from the waterfront more planting is desirable (gardens, street trees etc.) but it should remain structured and respect the fine grain and urban character of the development. Along the Pier Road frontage, a broad structural planting scheme would provide a buffer to the busy road and create an attractive prominent edge to the development. Species selection should take account of the maritime conditions.

Hard landscape

8.5.9 The existing tough, industrial/maritime remnants of the site should inform the public realm strategy without resorting to clichéd maritime features (e.g. anchors). Existing materials including timber, brick and ragstone-faced pier walls, setts on the slipway, timber moorings, chains and rope can provide appropriate cues to the design and specification of paving, boundary treatments and street furniture around the pier area. These elements should combine to create a safe, comfortable environment, but should avoid unnecessary visual clutter and aim to be wheelchair-friendly. Inland, hard landscaping should help create and maintain a distinctive character.

Public Art

8.5.10 Works of art in public spaces can help to reinforce identity and sense of place, and will be encouraged. This could include the design of paving elements, and street furniture such as seating and railings. The design of the public realm could allow for spaces to be used for performance and temporary art exhibits.

8.6 Other issues

Safety

8.6.1 Designing out crime should be a key consideration in the development of the area. It will be worth consulting with the local Police Architectural Liaison Officer at a pre-planning application stage. The major design aspects will involve creating clear distinctions between public and private space, encouraging street activity throughout the day, providing for natural surveillance of all areas and creating a high quality public realm, which encourages ownership by all those who use it. Further guidance can be found in "Secure by Design".

Flood risk

8.6.2 The site is at risk to tidal flooding under the 200 year surge tide event which places it within the 'High Risk Flood Zone' as set out in Planning Policy Guidance 25: Development and Flood Risk. This means that a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) must accompany any planning application. An FRA must follow the guidelines in Appendix F of PPG25 and address

all of the requirements contained in Appendix 5 of this brief (supplied by the Environment Agency). The FRA must be carried out by a suitably qualified professional.

8.6.3 The FRA results will inform the mechanisms and design solutions through which the site will be defended from tidal flooding. In order to safeguard the distinctive open and maritime character of this waterfront site, it will be preferable to limit the extent and impact of any flood defence wall. However, it is clear that raising floor levels in isolation will not be an acceptable solution. Redevelopment of the site will require detailed working with the Environment Agency and the Council to overcome the flood risk.

8.6.4 In addition, all habitable rooms must be at least 600 mm above the estimated 200-year surge tide level of 5.4 metres above datum level. This may involve the creation of duplex apartments with car parking underneath – although care must be taken to avoid dull or hostile public frontages. Access for maintenance and emergency vehicles must also be provided for – the Environment Agency will not normally consent works, which obstruct the 15 metres Bylaw Margin. Neither will it consent building out into the river on piers or otherwise. Early discussion with the Agency to agree an access strategy to the defence and the river frontage is recommended.

Wind

8.6.5 Being a riverside location the site is naturally fairly breezy and exposed to cold Northeasterly winds and, occasionally, high velocity waves, in the winter. This wind can be harnessed to ensure natural ventilation of spaces and buildings. However, the form and position of buildings should be designed to minimise wind funnelling and the creation of uncomfortable microclimates.

8.6.6 With the fairly dense built fabric sought for this site, the winds will generally be 'smoothed' over the area, whilst still allowing for more moderate air movement at ground level. When greater spacing is created, winds are forced down to make open spaces particularly uncomfortable. Any taller freestanding buildings will also need to consider the potential effects of eddy currents at ground / street level.

Biodiversity

8.6.7 Development should show consideration for any potential impact on nearby designated sites of nature conservation importance. As the site is close to the Medway Marshes and Estuary Special Protection Area and Ramsar site, the environmental effects of the development will be subject to rigorous examination, with reference to English Nature and to Regulation 48 of The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 as amended. Development should also seek to improve the biodiversity of the area, creating new habitats where practical. This could include inter-tidal habitats in association with works to any proposed river wall. Biodiversity issues must be investigated as part of any Environmental Impact Assessment, and the advice of the Environment Agency should always be sought.

Management and maintenance

8.6.8 Effective management arrangements will help to determine how attractive public spaces are

and how well people treat them. Development proposals will therefore need to demonstrate that a long-term management system will be put in place for those areas of mixed use and public access. This is particularly important where potential conflicts of interest can arise.

8.6.9 Examples of these are:

- The areas around the harbour where restaurants, bars and cafés could be below residential property and could adversely affect residential amenity through noise, fumes and uncontrolled waste. (Through its licensing powers the Council will apply the usual conditions in order to control such potential conflicts).
- The accesses around the harbour where sitting out, small boat movements, disabled access and even low key recreation might come into conflict.
- Car parking areas, both for residents and visitors.
- The boundaries between residential and commercial uses.

8.6.10 Developers will need to demonstrate and commit to a methodology (such as setting up and maintaining leasehold arrangements that contain practical sanctions) and funding to manage these areas in conjunction with residents and other stakeholders. Proposals will be secured through a Section 106 Agreement.

Sustainability

8.6.11 Development should be designed for long life, low maintenance, energy efficiency, and adaptability. Selection of materials should take into account energy in manufacture, transport and assembly on site. These matters should be addressed in a sustainability statement that should be submitted along with any planning application.

8.6.12 An evaluation of the environmental performance of a development (such as Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method or BREEAM) should be considered as part of the design process. Development should aim to satisfy the "very good" BREEAM standard.

A checklist of relevant design issues is provided in Appendix 4. This should be referred to in the preparation of any development proposal for this site. It aims to point out the main issues, rather than being a comprehensive list.

9. Implementation

9.1 Phasing

9.1.1 A sound delivery mechanism for development will need to be agreed by the Council and other stakeholders to ensure that the best mixed use of this site occurs. This is likely to involve a phased approach, balancing employment and residential elements

9.2 Requirements for submission of proposals

9.2.1 The Council would prefer a single developer or consortium of developers to come forward with proposals for the whole site. In the absence of this, any single application for any part of this site should be accompanied by a masterplan for the whole site, demonstrating the overall design concept. This should show the following:

- Zoning of the site into different uses – including mixed uses – as appropriate
- Public realm strategy
- Block plans showing the disposition of buildings relative to each other and to the movement system
- Approximate heights of buildings
- Movement system

9.2.2 Individual applications should be accompanied by: -

- A masterplan
- A transport impact assessment
- An Environmental Impact Assessment (to include a full Flood Risk Assessment following guidance set out in PPG25 and appended to this brief).
- A design statement
- An architectural and landscaping code - specifying a palette of materials, the elements and detailing of buildings and their enclosures that stand within the public realm. This code should be illustrated with photographs and diagrams illustrating the type of materials and detailing.
- A sustainability statement demonstrating how the proposals meet the criteria set out under local plan policy BNE4: Energy Efficiency and the sustainability principles set out in Kent Design.
- In addition to normal drawings – three-dimensional illustrations, photomontages or computer illustrations of the proposals sufficient to allow judgement of the overall design concept and how the scheme sits within the landscape.
- A public realm management statement – how spaces will be managed to allow for different types of user. This particularly applies to the area round the pier, which whilst being mainly pedestrianised, may have to allow for servicing and delivery to properties and premises.

9.3 Section 106 agreements

- Contributions to sports facilities
- Offsite highway works
- Flood defences and other necessary infrastructure
- Pier facilities/environmental improvements
- Community facilities
- Education contributions
- Health provision
- Local labour scheme

Contributions will be sought for the above areas in accordance with "A Good Practice Guide to Development Contributions"

Glossary

Active frontages

Provided by a building or other feature whose use is directly accessible from the street or space which it faces; the opposite effect to a blank wall. For example, a shop front is generally more 'active' than the front of an office or residential building, presenting more activity and interest to the street.

Human scale

The use within development of elements, which relate well in size to an individual human being and their assembly in a way, which makes people, feel comfortable rather than overwhelmed.

Landmark

A building or structure that stands out from its background by virtue of height, size or some other aspect of design.

Legibility

The degree to which a place can be easily understood and traversed.

Local distinctiveness

The positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place.

Massing

The combined effect of the height, bulk and silhouette of a building or group of buildings

Movement

People and vehicles going to and passing through buildings, places and spaces.

Natural or passive surveillance

The discouragement to wrong-doing by the presence of passers-by or the ability of people to be seen out of surrounding windows.

Public art

Permanent or temporary physical works of art visible to the general public, whether part of the building or free-standing: can include sculpture, lighting effects, street furniture, paving, railings and signs.

Public realm

The parts of a development that are available, without charge, for everyone to use or see, including streets, squares and parks.

Scale

The impression of a building when seen in relation to its surroundings.

Urban grain

The pattern of the arrangement and size of buildings and their plots in a settlement; and the degree to which an area's pattern of street-blocks and street junctions is respectively small and frequent, or large and infrequent.

Urban structure

The arrangement and inter-relationship between development blocks, streets, buildings, open space, landscape and all the other features which make up urban areas.

Visual clutter

The uncoordinated arrangement of street furniture, signs and other features

Local and Structure Plan Policies

Kent Structure Plan

The Kent Structure Plan (KSP) has been adopted by Medway as its upper level planning document. It covers the whole of the county and reflects government advice. The KSP was adopted in 1996 and is now undergoing review. The revised Plan will be called the Kent and Medway Structure Plan and will reflect the greater emphasis placed in most recent government advice on sustainable developments.

The 1996 KSP identifies that development should take place in urban areas rather than on green field sites.

For Medway it states, in Policy NK2 that its strategy is to

> *"promote development through reinvestment in the urban fabric including redevelopment and recycling of under used and derelict land within the urban framework, with a focus on riverside sites, in the interests of upgrading the environmental quality and image of the area and to restrict outward peripheral expansion on fresh land, in particular to the east of Gillingham. The provision of the Medway Towns Northern Relief Road and improvements to the A228 are key pieces of infrastructure needed to support regeneration pf the town centres and riverside sites and will be promoted. Long term protection will be afforded to areas of national, international or other strategic importance for nature conservation."*

The emerging revision of the KSP will continue this strategy.

Policy H3 of the 1996 KSP, dealing with housing, states:

> *"In meeting housing quantities set out in Policy H1 use will be made of opportunities at urban areas, particularly for small households who will benefit from being close to urban amenities. These opportunities may include:*
>
> *(a) the maintenance, renovation and adaptation of the existing housing stock*
>
> *(b) the use of land and buildings within the confines of existing urban areas including derelict land and other land no longer required for non housing purposes*
>
> *(c) land and buildings within or adjacent to town centres including mixed use redevelopment schemes incorporating new housing and the use of underutilised premises for residential purposes*
>
> *(d) ...*
>
> *Priority will be given to these forms of development in the preparation of local plans and in development control prior to the allocation or release of fresh land for development.*
>
> *The meeting of the housing provisions as set out in Policy H1 will not normally preclude the release of further sites conforming to the development categories in (a) – (d) above. .....*

Although Gillingham Harbour is not in a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) there is one to the north of the site (The River Medway) and, some 400 metres away, a part of the SSSI, which is also a Special Protection Area (SPA).

Local and Structure Plan Policies

Policies ENV4, ENV5 and ENV6 protect SPAs and SSSIs from harmful development. ENV11 refers specifically to river corridors and mentions increased public access and water related recreational opportunities that are not inconsistent with maintaining the environment of the river and habitats.

Medway Local Plan

The Medway Local Plan was adopted and has been operative from 14 May 2003.

The strategies and policies follow the lead given by government advice and the Kent Structure Plan. In the Development Strategy section (Policy S1) the emphasis is on the redevelopment of riverside sites and the use for residential development of non-housing sites in the urban area.

Policy S2 (iii) says the implementation of the Strategy will include the 'adoption of a sequential approach to the location of major people and traffic attracting forms of development including retailing, leisure, educational and health facilities'.

Policy S3, River Medway, says the council will seek 'appropriate commercial, leisure and tourism development along the river's edge of a high quality design.'

Policy R1 sets out a strategy for comparison shopping, including bulky goods. Chatham Centre is to be promoted as a regional scale comparison goods centre and any proposal that might undermine this will be resisted.

Policy R12 reinforces this by requiring a 'sequential test' to be applied, seeking to direct new retail development to the core areas. Criteria are the effects on core areas, access by public transport and the minimisation of journeys.

Policy ED1, dealing with existing employment sites, refers to this site as one on which employment uses will be permitted and the loss of existing development to other uses will not be permitted. This policy is affected by more recent Government advice to consider out of date industrial areas for residential development as well.

Policy L4, open space provision, requires formal open space to be provided in residential development to defined standards (1.7 hectares per 1,000 population of formal recreation space and 0.7 hectares per 1,000 of children's space and casual space) but allows for its provision off site if there is no practical alternative.

These are only a selection of the more important Local Plan policies affecting this site. There are a number of other Local Plan policies, which are relevant, and reference should be made to the Local Plan.

Kent Design – A Guide to Sustainable Development

The ten principles advocated by Kent Design are:

- **Collaboration** – Adopt a proactive and collaborative approach to development proposals to achieve the best solution for any site.
- **Innovation –** Seek environmentally sustainable solutions through innovative design
- **Mixed Use –** Bring together residential, commercial, retail and community uses in a manner which reduces the need to travel and improves quality of life.
- **Safety –** Provide a safe, healthy and secure living environment for people and property
- **Maintenance –** Ensure long term maintenance of the public realm through formal adoption and other management arrangements
- **Maximising Use –** Maximise the use of land by encouraging the development of recycled land and increasing density
- **Movement –** Promote the movement of people by walking, cycling and public transport to reduce both dependencies on the car and air pollution
- **Resources –** Conserve natural resources and minimise pollution in the layout, construction and ongoing use of a development.
- **Locality -** Embrace local distinctiveness, promote quality and protect existing features of cultural, visual and historic importance.
- **Landscape -** Conserve, create and integrate open space, townscape, landscape and natural habitats to mitigate the impact of development.

National Government Guidance – summary review

Planning Policy Guidance Note 1: General Policy and Principles (1997)

This central government guidance note now contains extensive sections on sustainability, mixed uses, and design. It stresses that mixed uses create vitality and diversity, and reduces the need to travel. It further states that the planning system can be used to deliver high quality mixed-use developments such as urban villages. These are characterised by

- compactness;
- a mix of uses and dwelling types;
- range of employment, leisure and community facilities;
- high standards of urban design;
- access to public open space and green spaces; and
- ready access to public transport.

Good design is recognised as being important in promoting sustainable development, attracting business and investment, reinforcing civic pride and developing a sense of place. It is further stated that design 'can help secure continued public acceptance of necessary new development.' The promotion of design through development plan design policies, fleshed out by supplementary design guidance, including local design guides and site specific development briefs is encouraged.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 3: Housing (March 2000)

The recently revised PPG3 has new emphasis on sustainable development, and it links this to advice on design. The government letter introducing the revised PPG specifically states that this... *'will require a new approach by local planning authorities, the development industry and all those involved in planning for housing'*. A determination to see this approach carried forward is evidenced by further Government proposals to the effect that all housing proposals over 150 dwellings or 5 hectares should, in future, be subject to scrutiny by Government Offices.

Key features of the revised PPG3 include: -

- substantial new development must be planned as a community with a mix of land uses, including adequate shops, employment and services;
- housing development with a density of between 30 and 50 dwellings per hectare should be encouraged to make more efficient use of land. Developments of less than 30 dwellings per hectare should be avoided;
- a greater intensity of development should be sought for places with good public transport accessibility;
- design should focus on the quality of the places and should give priority to the needs of pedestrians rather than the movement and parking of vehicles; and
- inflexible planning standards, especially those with regard to road layouts and parking, should be avoided in order to avoid profligate use of land.

By Design- Urban Design in the Planning System- Towards Better Practice
(DETR & CABE, 2000)

A wide ranging manual of urban design and how it should be promoted through the planning system. It outlines a series of objectives of urban design, explains them with a mixture of illustrations, examples and checklists. The clear intention is that these objectives should be interpreted and included within the local planning and supplementary planning guidance processes. The guide therefore provides a 'best practice' planning tool kit for implementing these objectives. The objectives seek to integrate open space, movement, and the built environment into overall design strategies and provide further advice on adaptability of development to meet changing needs.

Places, Streets and Movement: A Companion guide to DB32
(DETR, 1998)

Promotes a flexible interpretation of Design Bulletin 32- Residential Road Layouts, in particular emphasising sense of place through integration of open space, buildings, and circulation networks. Encourages walking, public transport, and reduction of car use. Promotes a move away from overly prescriptive standards to flexibility. Many of the case studies, and the technical illustrations, feature tight urban layouts having similar qualities to that of traditional villages.

Review of 'Better Places To Live: By Design'

DTLR, CABE (September 2001)

Introduction

The purpose of this guide is to help deliver that change in quality – to effect a culture change. It does not set out new policy, but seeks to take the principles of good urban design laid out in PPG3 and By Design a stage further and to draw out our understanding of the elements that combine to create successful residential areas.

Crucially, this guide is not to be seen as a detailed 'Do-It-Yourself' manual on housing development or architectural treatment. As the Guide states it aims 'to prompt greater attention to the principles of good design, not constrain thought'…'its focus is the urban design principles and approaches which underpin successful housing.' (p.8, para 3)

It is aimed at all those involved in the planning, design and development of new housing, but in particular, at local planning and highway authorities, house builders and their professional advisors. 'The greatest challenge to current practice lies in improving the quality of the 'anywhere, everywhere' residential environments that, typically, have been built at around 20 to 25 dwellings per hectare.' (p.8, para 4)

Structure of the Guide

The Guide sets out a comprehensive approach to housing development under six key aspects. These aim to reflect the complex layering of analysis from understanding the context for new development right through to detailed design. These issues are closely inter-related and addressing them requires a shift away from current practice if we are to deliver 'somewhere' places rather than 'anywhere, everywhere' homes. This sentiment is also reflected in the 'Kent Design Guide – a guide to sustainable development.'

A summary of some of the main points relating to each of the key aspects now follows.

Understanding the Context: creating 'somewhere', not 'anywhere, everywhere'

From the outset, the Guide highlights the importance of understanding the local context and physical environment in which new development is to take place. This initial analysis should include an assessment of:

- scale and massing of development;
- framework for movement (routes and connections);
- mix of dwelling types and sizes;
- landform, landscape and ecology of the site;
- landmark buildings or important landscape features;
- orientation of buildings;
- views into and through the site;
- mix of uses and provision of community facilities;
- public open spaces opportunities; and
- amount and arrangement of car parking.

In particular, greater emphasis now needs to be given to the linkages between new housing and local facilities; the public transport network; and established walking and cycling routes. Making these linkages will assist in delivering sustainable patterns of movement, increased choices for people and in reducing dependence on the private car to get around.

The main route into a new neighbourhood. Everyone accesses along it, yet the houses turn their backs onto it. The result is a soulless place where pedestrians feel insecure and where drivers are 'encouraged' to drive fast. (p.11)

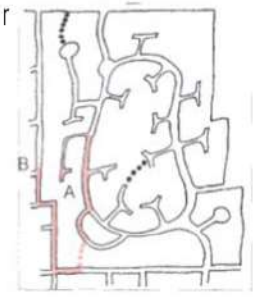
Standard house types developed without proper regard for their context and setting. This scheme misses the opportunity to optimise housing capacity and undermines the character of the existing street. (p.11)

Creating a Movement Framework: the more connections the better

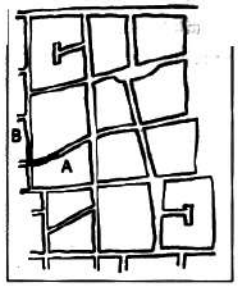
Too often housing layouts have been based on and shaped around the use of the car, with a natural result that residents find it easier to use their car than any other form of travel. This is contrary to the current goal of sustainability. The Guide seeks to move away from the dominance of the car and to encourage housing layouts that provide people with a choice in how they make their journeys.

It therefore encourages us to look at future developments in a different way. To consider the layout of buildings and spaces first and the network of roads and routes second. This means placing less emphasis on the rigid application of traffic flows and highway engineering standards in terms of road hierarchies, junction separation distances, sight lines and greater emphasis on housing layouts. As a

result of this, the layout of buildings and spaces can control vehicle movement and speed – a traffic calming effect in itself. This will then help to avoid relying on add-on measures such as speed humps and chicanes commonly used to calm traffic within



In this layout the journey from A to B is a long convoluted one. It does not allow for easy pedestrian journeys to neighbouring facilities, making a car trip more likely to get from A to B. (p.25)



In this layout the journey from A to B is short, legible and direct. It encourages pedestrian journeys to local facilities as the preferred option. (p.25)

In all of this it is important not to forget that routes should lead to where people want to go. The aim is to create a street hierarchy that is open-ended, is well served by public transport and is characterised by well-connected places which people can walk round and through. Introverted and dead-end layouts should be avoided. These limit the choices on where we can go.

Housing Mix & Neighbourhood: balanced residential communities

The Guide identifies the need to provide a mix of housing types and uses which can contribute to the creation of more attractive residential areas by enabling a greater diversity of building forms and scales. For example;

- *apartments* and *mixed use buildings*, by their larger scale, can give a sense of identity to local centres and turn corners elegantly with continuous frontage;
- *town houses* can contribute to more formal compositions of avenues, circuses and squares and help frame open spaces; and
- *community buildings* such as schools and health centres can be designed to give status to civic spaces and provide a focus for community.

A good mix of both housing types and sizes is important in creating a basis for a balanced community. The provision of community facilities can support community development and needs, as well as to create a focus and sense of identity for a neighbourhood.

Housing Layout & Urban Form: better quality homes at increased densities

In line with PPG3, the Guide recommends housing densities in the range of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare and upwards where appropriate. In doing this, it argues that higher housing densities need not result in lower standards of space around and within our homes.

Residential environments should display a clearly defined and coherent urban structure that is characterised by a framework of inter-connected routes, which define 'blocks' of housing, open spaces and other uses. The layout of housing within these street blocks can take a variety of forms:

- regular rectangular or square blocks based on a grid;
- concentric grids designed to promote access to local centres or public transport routes; or
- irregular layouts with a more 'organic' character.

A key characteristic of these blocks is that dwellings front onto public streets rather than turning their back on them – thus creating a positive and distinctive street scene. The treatment of street width and enclosure as well as corners also requires careful consideration as these frequently provide the opportunity to mark a place and create a distinctive landmark feature.

As a guide to establishing parking policies, the Guide points to an upper threshold of 1.5 car spaces per dwelling and lower wherever practical. Solutions to parking need to be tailored to circumstances, but the range of options available is wide and includes on-street parking, courtyard parking, in-curtilage parking and basement and undercroft parking.

Designing in safety is an integral part of house building. At all times, housing development should create a sense of community safety and personal security.

A well articulated roofline, a strong horizontal parapet and well proportioned fenestration all contribute to the quality of this scheme. Even the guttering and vents are used to punctuate the facade and contribute to the sense of proportion. Brightlingsea Place, Tower Hamlets. (p.74)

Space In & Around the Home: maximise flexibility and choice

The interface between indoor and outdoor spaces is crucial if we are to create distinct and valued places.

The emphasis here is on promoting 'lifetime homes' - houses that are flexible in design, responding to changes in circumstances as well as social and workplace trends. Initial design and choices of construction method can have an important bearing on the potential of homes to be adaptable overtime in this way.

Thoroughness in Design: attention to detail and a commitment to quality

This section of the Guide does not attempt to offer a detailed design manual. The key message is that the quality of a building or housing scheme can be spoilt by poor attention to detail.

The Guide emphasises the fact that there is no single appropriate design response. Style is a matter of personal taste. Quality comes in many forms in response to many different contexts and it is a fusion of all the elements: building; landscape and the interface between them which are needed to create a place of distinction. The Guide quite rightly however, also states that there is danger of seeing detailed design responses as either 'traditional' or 'modern.' Traditional materials and design ideas can be used in a totally modern way.

Equally, new materials and approaches to construction can be used to create an architectural treatment that reflects traditional styles. What is of fundamental importance is the application of a coherent and integrated approach to the detailed design of a place. In essence, creating high quality residential environments requires a continuing commitment to quality and detailed design.

Attributes of Successful Housing: a checklist for better places to live

In an attempt to draw all the elements together the Guide identifies a number of attributes, which it sees as being central to successful housing development. These are summarised as:

Movement	***A movement framework which is safe, direct and attractive to users;***
Mix	*A rich mix of housing opportunities;*
Community	*A sense of neighbourhood and community ownership;*
Structure	*A coherent structure of buildings, spaces, landscape and routes for movement;*
Layout	*Street layout and design which is appropriate to use and context;*
Place	*Attractive and clearly defined public and private spaces;*
Amenity	*Pleasant gardens and private amenity space;*
Parking	*Convenient but unobtrusive car parking;*
Safety	*A safe and secure environment;*
Space	*Well planned homes which provide space and functionality;*
Adaptability	*Housing which is robust and adaptable to changing requirements;*
Maintenance	*An environment which can be well maintained over the long term;*
Sustainability	*Housing designed to minimise resource consumption; and*
Detail	*Well designed detailing of buildings and spaces.*

* not arranged in any order of priority or importance

In addition to this, each chapter of the Guide contains a short list of points, which it suggests should be considered in appraising the design of new development. The aim of the list is to help get people to understand, share and focus in on the key issues, opportunities and potential for housing development at an early stage. The Guide points out however, that this checklist remains only a starting point from which to assess the basic merits or shortcomings of a particular scheme.

Case Studies

The final part of the Guide calls upon 12 case studies which include a broad range of housing forms and densities: from suburban houses developed as urban extensions right through to high density city-centre apartments. There is however, a current drive to raise densities from around 20 –25 dwellings per hectare to the range of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare. This reflects the primary concern to move away from typical average densities of between 20 to 25 dwellings that are characteristic of housing schemes in recent years.

Information presented for each of the case studies covers a general evaluation of the scheme, density, levels of car parking provision, dwelling sizes, housing tenure and overall land budget. All are supported by colour photographs and plan extracts.

The case studies are useful in providing examples of various approaches to housing development, and ultimately the generation of alternative layouts and forms. In doing so, they represent a baseline position from which to go about finding unique responses to housing schemes. This highlights the need to be place specific at all times.

Summary of key points

- Average housing densities in the range of 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare;
- Loss of local identity through widespread application of road layouts and car parking provision standards – victims of suburban 'anywhere';
- The layout of buildings can help shape the pattern of roads (not the other way round);
- An upper threshold of 1.5 car parking spaces per dwelling but lower wherever practical;
- Residential environments must be seen in the round – the site, immediate surroundings, access to local facilities and public transport;
- Provide a range of new housing opportunities - better mix in terms of size, types and costs;
- New developments should be flexible and adaptable to respond to changes in conditions and preferences;
- Shortcomings in housing developments are frequently related to basic issues of building layout rather than detailed issues of internal configuration, construction materials or architectural treatment, although thoroughness in detailed design matters;
- Local authorities are to reject poor designs and the application of standard housing types and layout forms which fail to make distinctive and quality places; and
- Consistency and continuing commitment is needed at all stages of the development process.

Design checklist

General

- What is the development **design concept**? Has this been informed by the characteristics of the site and its surroundings to create a distinctive and quality place? Or is it simply the application of standard housing types and layout forms?
- Has a **flood risk assessment** been carried out by a suitably qualified professional? Does this propose measures to mitigate against flooding, which can be fed into the design concept? Has the Environment Agency been consulted on these proposals?
- Does the development allow for a **mix of uses and activities**, in particular around the public pier-side area? How does development propose to mix uses? Does this help ensure a safe and attractive environment during the **day and night**?

Land use mix

- Does the pier-side – as focal area – accommodate the highest concentration and mix of uses, including leisure uses?
- Have the pier operations been retained? Have facilities been provided / re-accommodated to encourage continued use of the pier?
- Does the development accommodate the required level of employment uses? Are these largely concentrated along the Pier Road frontage?
- Has a range of housing opportunities, in terms of dwelling types, sizes, affordability and accessibility been incorporated within the scheme (including 25% affordable provision)? How well are these integrated with each other?
- Has the need for supporting community facilities and services been considered in relation to existing patterns of provision and incorporated as part of the design strategy?
- Are all parts of the site assigned a positive use?
- Does the proposed density of development make efficient use of land?
- Has careful consideration been given to the design of spaces between different uses, particularly where residential use adjoins general industrial use?

Built form

- Is the proposed building design and layout imaginative, interesting and responsive to its environment?

Design checklist

- Have buildings been designed to maximise their sustainability in construction and in lifetime use?
- How have new and existing 'gateways' been created or reinforced? How does this contribute to the legibility of the area?
- Has the need for a landmark building, to contribute to local legibility, been considered?
- Do all buildings face onto public spaces?
- How have corners been addressed? Is continuity of aspect maintained?
- Has an architectural and landscaping code been produced?
- Has the massing of buildings been broken down so that their proportions provide a comfortable enclosure of the public realm?
- Do the layout and design of dwellings allow for future adaptation to meet changing needs?
- Does development address the waterfront?
- Has the security of the adjacent private moorings been considered in the proposed design?
- Has a strong, continuous and attractive edge been created along the Pier Road frontage? Does this incorporate a landscaped footpath?
- Has particular attention been paid to the form, details and use of the lower storeys of buildings which impact most on the public realm?

Public Realm

- Has a strong, coherent approach to the design of the public realm been taken?
- Has a public realm strategy been prepared, considering the design and future maintenance and management arrangements? Does this include a landscape plan?
- Is landscape design recognised as an integral part of the overall design? Does this incorporate both hard and soft landscaping elements?
- Is there a clear distinction between public, semi-private and private spaces? Is there any leftover space?

Design checklist

- Is all public space addressed by development? Are all public spaces (including routes) overlooked to ensure passive surveillance?
- Has public art been integrated into the public space focal areas?
- How have public open spaces helped shape the design? Are they each designed with a purpose in mind?
- How do dwellings relate to open spaces in terms of their frontage and scale?
- Has a comprehensive lighting strategy been followed that provides a safe, attractive and interesting environment?

Movement and Connections

- Has a thorough traffic impact study been carried out?
- Are all parts of the movement network well connected and barrier-free (avoiding cul-de-sac layouts and changes in level)?
- Does the development provide for all types of movement?
- Has a pedestrian-friendly environment / 'walkable neighbourhood' been created?
- Is traffic calming an integral part of the layout design?
- Have a range of parking solutions been designed to cater for all users, and without dominating the public realm? Has the maximum average of 1.5 car parking spaces per dwelling been followed? Has at least one cycle parking space per 5 dwellings been provided?
- Is the waterfront publicly accessible and well connected to the overall route and public space network? Does this include a riverside walk?
- Are the pedestrian routes to bus stops and pedestrian crossings along Pier Road direct and provided with good levels of natural surveillance?
- How does development reduce the effect of severance caused by the dual carriageway?
- Is the pier-side area a shared-surface and given pedestrian-priority status?

Flood risk assessment

A number of points will need to be addressed in any Flood Risk Assessment including;

- Details of the proposed defence including line and level. The level must include a freeboard for settlement and wave action and the design should not compromise the ability to further raise the defence in the future if it becomes necessary.
- Details of the proposed levels for all habitable accommodation. The Agency is likely to object to accommodation that is not at least 600mm above the 200-year level. This requirement on accommodation also applies to bedrooms within hotels/hostels or similar developments. The raised accommodation is in addition to a primary defence wall or bund. The Agency has no requirement for floor levels on commercial development if it is appropriately defended.
- Details of means of escape in flood conditions from the basement parking areas to prevent entrapment.
- Details of flood resistant construction and mitigation measures such as raising power points etc.
- Details of the phasing of the construction of any flood defence to ensure the defence is always continuous and protects those parts of the development already completed.
- Section 106 agreement to include contribution to a flood defence and its ongoing maintenance.
- If individual applications are submitted for parts of the site at risk of flooding then the Masterplan should include the flood defence scheme and until the defence is continuous no residential or commercial unit should be occupied.
- Details of a scheme for the provision of surface water drainage works which should address tide lock storage.
- Details of the maintenance of any flood defence structure.
- Details of access for maintenance of the flood defence structure and the river frontage.